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ON THE
OUTSKIRTS
OF THE
CITY OF NEW
ORLEANS...
ON THE
RIVER ROAD,
WITHIN
SIGHT OF
THE MISSIS-
SIPPI...

DHS
PLACE
HASN'T
CHANGED.

NEITHER
HAS
WHAT
PASSES
FOR
SECURITY.

BEEN
SNEAKIN'
IN JUST
LIKE THIS
SINCE I
WAS A
PUP.

NOBODY,
BUT ONE,
WAS WEL-
COMING
ME IN-
SIDE
BACK
THEN.

AND I'M
SURE
NONE OF
THEM
INSIDE
WILL BE
ROLLIN'
OUT A RED
CARPET
FOR THE
RETURN
OF DHS
THIEF
TONIGHT.

TOO
QUIET...

...LIKE A
FUNERAL
PARLOR.

THE HOUSE
WAS
ALWAYS
FULL OF
WILD GOIN'S
ON WHEN
SHE WAS
ALIVE.

DREW
ME TO
HER
LIKE A
CANDLE
TO A
FLAME.

PEOPLE
ALWAYS
WARNIN'
ME THAT
I'D BE
THE ONE
TO GET
BURNT.

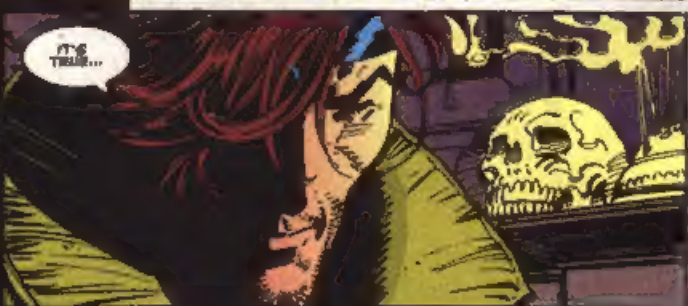
BELLE.

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT COULD BRING ME BACK TO THIS CITY.

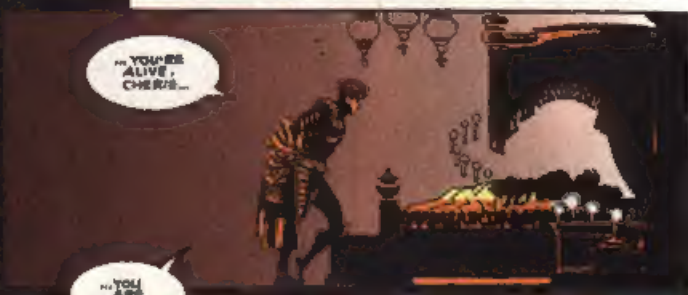
YOU WERE THE ONLY REASON I STAYED AS LONG AS I DID.

AN' YOU WERE THE REASON I HAD TO LEAVE.

NOW I'M SEARCHIN' FOR THE GHOSTS OF MY YOUTH.

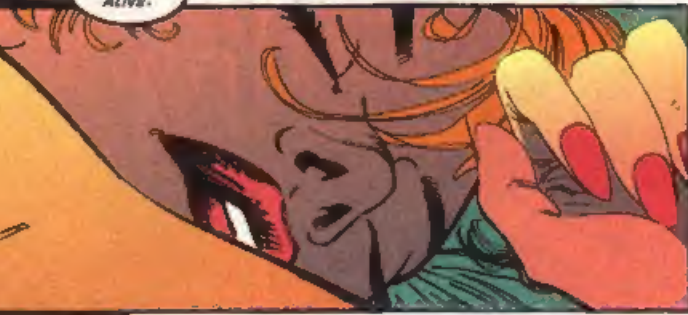


IT'S TRUE...



"YOU'RE ALIVE, CHERIE..."

"YOU ARE ALIVE."





HONOR amongst THIEVES

STORY/ART HOWARD / LEE / KLAUS
MACKIE / WEEKS / JANSON

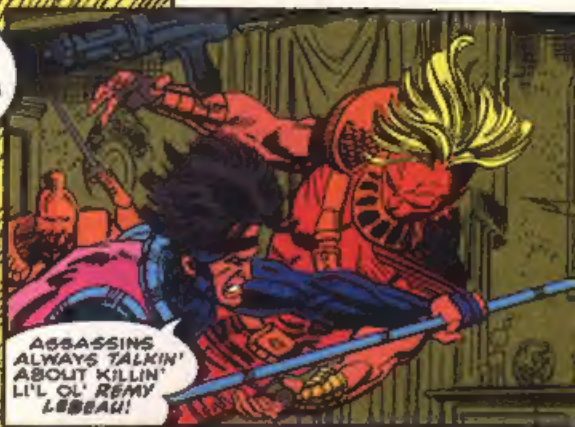
COLORIST STEVE BUCCELLATO LETTERER RICHARD STARKINGS EDITOR BOB HARRAS CHIEF TOM DEFALCO

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Pah!
FOR A LONG
TIME I BE
HEARIN' THAT
TRASH FROM
THE LIKES
OF YOU!

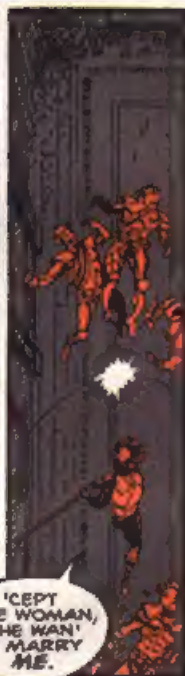


ASSASSINING
ALWAYS TALKIN'
ABOUT KILLIN'
LI'L OL' REMY
LEBEAU!



SAYIN'
I AIN'T GOOD
ENOUGH TO
MARRY NO
ASSASSIN
WOMAN!

'CEPT
THE WOMAN,
SHE WAN'
TO MARRY
ME.



BEST
OF YOU
NEVER
COULD TAKE
ME IN A
FAIR
FIGHT!



THAT'S WHEN
I LEARNED
TO FIGHT NONE
TOO FAIR!



NOTHIN'S
CHANGED,
EH!

EVERYTHING'S
CHANGED...
GAMBIT!

MY BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER HOVERS NEAR THE EDGE OF DEATH BECAUSE OF YOU AND YOUR NEW COMRADES.

TWO OF MY CHILDREN YOU HAVE TAKEN FROM ME. SO...

"I WILL HAVE THE PLEASURE OF TAKING YOUR LIFE IN A DUEL OF HONOR, SIR!"

PICK UP THE SWORD, LEBEAU.

MARIUS, I DID NOT COME HERE TO DUEL WITH YOU --

THEN YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE COME AT ALL, SON-IN-LAW.


NO MORE WORDS: PICK UP THE SWORD IF YOU HAVE ANY HONOR.

OR DON'T YOU EVEN HAVE THE HONOR OF A THIEF? NO... YOU ARE NOT TRULY ONE OF THEIRS, ARE YOU?

YOU ARE JUST A MUTANT OUTSIDER PICKED UP... OR WAS IT STOLEN...? WHEN YOU WERE BUT A BASTARD, AN ADOPTED THIEF!

Psh! A DEAD THIEF!

ALL RIGHT. WE FIGHT THEN.



BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT YOUR SON, JULIEN, IS NOT DEAD.


LAST NIGHT, HE AND I FOUGHT AFTER HE HAD MURDERED MY BROTHER, HENRI.

THE OUTCOME WAS NOT TO HIS ADVANTAGE.

BUT IT WAS HE WHO SENT ME DOWN HERE...

...BY WARNING ME TO STAY AWAY!

THAT THING IS NOT MY SON!



MY SON WAS A MAN OF HONOR.

YOU TOOK HIS HONOR, AND HIS LIFE, AWAY FROM HIM, THIEF!



THE CREATURE WHICH WALKS AS MY SON WALKED WOULD BETRAY HIS FAMILY, HIS FATHER, HIS GUILD!

IT IS AN ABOMINATION THAT MUST BE DESTROYED.


I DIDN'T COME HERE TO ARGUE ABOUT EVENTS OF THE PAST WITH MY FATHER-IN-LAW.

THIS FIGHT...

...ENDS...

...NOW.

POOM



CALL
OFF YOUR
KILLERS,
MARINE.

I HAVE
NO DESIRE
TO KILL
MY FATHER-
IN-LAW!

KILL THIS
HONORLESS
MUTANT
THIEF...

NOW.

KTASH

PARDON
ME,
FELLAS...

...BUT I
DON'T TAKE
KINDLY TO
ALL THIS
KILLIN'
TALK.

GAMBIT
HERE IS A
TEAM-MATE
O' MINE...

...AND
EVEN
THOUGH
HE DOES
TEND TO
RUN OFF
AT THE
MOUTH...

...I
LIKE HIM
THE WAY
HE IS--
ALIVE!

Y'ALL
TAKE
CARE
NOW!



ROGUE, MA CHERIE, I ASKED YOU TO STAY OUT OF DIS!

ASKIN' AIN'T GETTIN', REMY!

'SIDES, THERE SEEMS TO BE MORE THAN ENOUGH O' THIS HERE LITTLE GAME FOR BOTH OF US!



M-SWEET, AS YOU RECENTLY POINTED OUT T' ME IN THE DANGER ROOM...



...THIS IS NO GAME!
ASSASSINS ALWAYS PLAY FOR KEEPS!



BUT, FORTUNATELY, SO DO THIEVES!

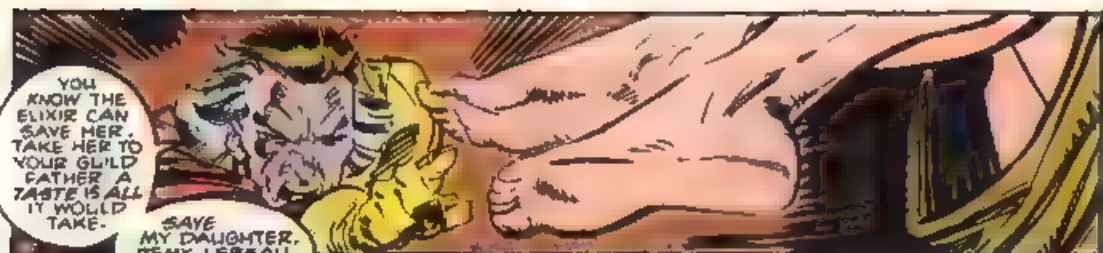


AND X-MEN!



TOUCHÉ.





YOU KNOW THE ELIXIR CAN SAVE HER. TAKE HER TO YOUR GUILD FATHER A TASTE IS ALL IT WOULD TAKE.

SAVE MY DAUGHTER. REMY LEBEAU. SAVE YOUR WIFE!

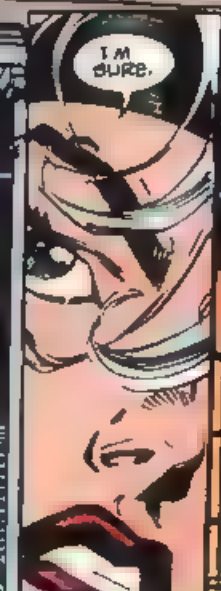
TOO MUCH TO ASK, EH? YOUR SECRETS CAN'T BE SHARED OUTSIDE THE GUILD? OR COULD YOU POSSIBLY BETRAY YOUR FAMILY FOR THE LIFE OF ONE YOU PROMISED TO CHERISH IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH...?

YOU WOULD HAVE TO GIVE UP ALL CLAIMS TO HONOR.

WE'LL BE OFF NOW.

LET ME TAKE HER, GAMBIT. IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN.

ROGUE.. YOU SURE?



I'M SURE.

DO RIGHT BY MY DAUGHTER, LEBEAU!

GAMBIT AND ROGUE'S CAPTURE IS SERVED FROM THE DOWNS OF THE NIGHT



AND, AS THE SAYING GOES, "IF LOOKS COULD KILL..."



FOR NOW, THE
BURNING RAGE
IS DIRECTED
ELSEWHERE.

SEPARATING HIMSELF
FROM THE SHADOWS...

...THE DARK
ASSASSIN SLIPS
INSIDE...

...TO FACE
THOSE HE
ONCE
CALLED
FAMILY.

NOW AN OUT-
CAST AMONG
KILLERS...

... AN ASSASSIN
WITHOUT HONOR

.. HE IS
THE ENEMY.

THE BATTLE IS
SWIFT, EFFICIENT
AND BRUTAL.

ONE BY ONE,
ASSASSINS
FALL BEFORE
THE MURDEROUS
ATTACK.

NONE ARE
SPARED
HIS RAGE.

FRIENDS AND
FAMILY ALIKE
FALL BEFORE
THE MURDEROUS
ATTACK

THE BLOOD OF CHILDHOOD
PLAYMATES MANGLES AT THE
FEET OF ONE THEY ONCE
CALLED FRIEND

TONIGHT, THEIR
WOMEN WILL WEEP

FATHER,
WE WILL
HAVE
WORDS.

I AM
FATHER
TO YOU NO
LONGER,
KILLER!

THE
DAY YOU
CAME INTO
THIS WORLD
IS A BLIGHT
ON THE
MEMORY OF
YOUR DEAR
MOTHER

PUT AN
END TO MY
SUFFERING...

.. KILL
ME NOW,
JULIEN!



FATHER...

YOUR
SUFFERING
BE JUST
BEGINNING!

YOU
LET HIM
TAKE MY
BELOVED
SISTER...
AGAIN?

FOR
THIS, KILLING
YOU WOULD
BE SO
EASY.

TIME'S
COME FOR
OUR GUILD
TO BE RE-
NEGOTIATING
THE OLD
PACTS.

THE
POWERS
AND THE
LIFE CAN
BE
OURS.

HAVING
HAD A
TASTE
BOTH...
I WANT
IT ALL.

YOU
AND ALL
THE WEAK
ONES WHO
CLAIM THE
NAME
ASSASSIN.

YOU
WILL FAIL,
JULIEN!
I WILL SEE
TO IT.



YOU BE
DOING
NOTHING,
FATHER! THE
ELIXIR AND
BELLA DONNA
WILL BE
MINE!

YOU
WON'T BE
POISONING
HER MIND
AGAINST
ME NO
MORE.

BELLA
DONNA
WILL SIT BY MY
SIDE AT THE NEW
ASSASSIN
GUILD.



THINK
ABOUT
THAT,
FATHER!

SHRAVE

DE
OLD WAYS
BE DEAD!

IN AN UNDERGROUND
CHAMBER BENEATH
THE FRENCH QUARTER...

...THE TITHING
CEREMONY
COMMENCES.

MEMBERS OF THE TEN FAMILIES
OF THIEVES STAND READY TO
PRESENT TRIBUTE TO THE TITHE
COLLECTOR IN EXCHANGE FOR

...LONG
LIFE. IT
IS OUR
PACT.

IT IS
YOUR
RIGHT.

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE
IN EXCHANGE FOR
THE TITHE, JEAN-LUC
LEBEAU.

BY THE GRACE OF
CANDRA, THE
BENEFACTRESS, I
GIVE YOU THE
FIRST VIAL -

FATHER!

WE
WILL HAVE
WORDS!

WHAT'S
GOING ON
HERE,
SUGAH?

FAMILY
BUSINESS,
ROGUE. YOU
DO NOT
HAVE TO BE
HERE

I'M
NOT LEAVIN'
YOU ON YOUR
OWN
AGAIN.



REMY!
WHAT HAVE
YOU
DONE?

THE
TITHING
CEREMONY



... IS
OVER.

SETTLE
YOUR
BUSINESS,
QUICKLY,
TH EYES,
OR THE RE-
MAINING
ELIXIR
RETURNS TO
CANDRA...

... AND
THE
PACT IS
BROKEN.



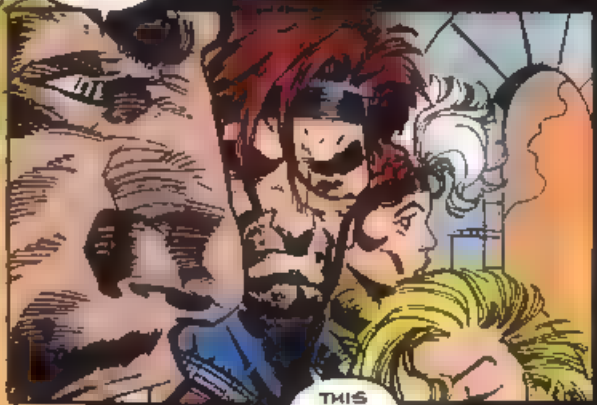
HE'S
GONE!

THE
ELIXIR?



YOU
DARE
DISRUPT
THE
ANCIENT
CEREMONY,
REMY
LEBEAULT!
FOR THIS
YOU
SHALL...

ENOUGH



THIS
IS MY
SON...

... WE
WILL
SPEAK. THE
CEREMONY
WILL CON-
TINUE

SHORTLY.

HOW MANY MORE ARE TO DIE FATHER?

IS NOT THE DEATH OF YOUR SON, MY BROTHER, ENOUGH? MUST MY WIFE TOO PAY THE PRICE OF ANCIENT FEUDS?

THE ELIXIR CAN SAVE HER. I WANT IT.

ALREADY DEAD?

NEVER!

YOU WILL HAVE NOTHING REMY!

PIERRE..

"I WAS TALKIN' TO MY FATHER..."

THE ELIXIR, FATHER...

.. OR WOULD YOU HAVE ME TURN AS-BASSON RIGHT HERE?

IT CANNOT BE, EVEN IF WE HAD ALL THREE VIALS, I COULD NOT GIVE ANY TO AN OUT-SIDER.

HAVE IT YOUR WAY, FATHER..

GAMBIT!

YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, REMY. THIS ISN'T YOU.



OF COURSE IT'S NOT, CHERIE.

BUT THEN AGAIN...

YOU DON'T KNOW ME AS WELL AS YOU THINK YOU DO!

NO ONE DOES



**FWAKOOM
FWAKOOM
FWAKOOM**



YOU ALL WRAP YOURSELVES IN THE ANCIENT RITUALS, FATHER - THE OLD WAYS.

LIVE BENEATH THE STREETS LIKE PAUPERS...

...WHILE YOU LET THE WEALTH SLIP THROUGH YOUR FINGERS.

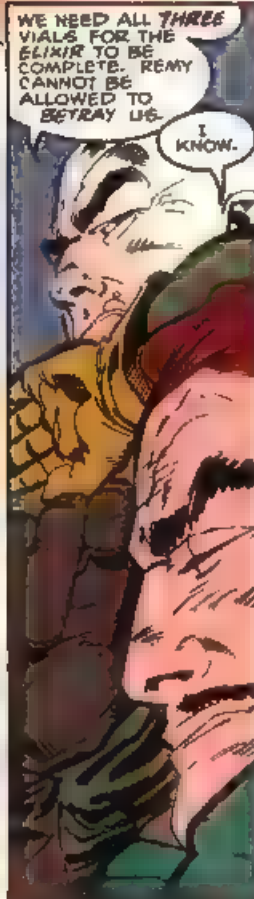
YOU GIVE EVERYTHING AWAY IN EXCHANGE FOR LONG LIFE.

THAT IS NOT LIVING.

MY BROTHER IS DEAD. MY WIFE WILL BE SAVED.

IF MY FAMILY WILL NOT HELP ME WITH THIS...

...THEN I WILL DO IT MYSELF.



WE NEED ALL THREE VIALS FOR THE ELIXIR TO BE COMPLETE. REMY CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO BETRAY US.

I KNOW.



MOURN THE LOSS OF TWO SONS, JEAN-LUC LE BEAU

SHROUDED IN MIST, THE TITHE COLLECTOR CONTINUES HIS JOURNEY THROUGH THE BACK STREETS OF THE FRENCH QUARTER.

WRAPPED IN A CLOAK OF FEAR, THE STREETS EMPTY BEFORE HIM.

FEW WOULD CONFRONT THE TITHE COLLECTOR ON HIS MID-NIGHT MEANDERINGS.

FEW...

... BUT NOT ALL.



WHAT? ASSASSIN, YOU DARE?



YEAH, WE DARE, OLD MAN!

DARE TO BE TAKIN' WHAT IS OURS BY RIGHT OF BIRTH AND THE SWEAT OF OUR BROW!

YOU WILL NEVER HAVE--



WE'LL BE HAVIN' IT ALL, TITHE COLLECTOR:

YOU BEEN GIVIN' US THE POWER TO DO THE TAKIN' FOR A LOT OF YEARS NOW.

SO NOW WE DO WHAT WE BE TRAINED TO DO...

KILL...

...AND TAKE!



WHY? THE FACT--?

IN ANCIENT HISTORY!





FOR BOTH GUILDS, JULIEN.

UNITED WE
HAVE ENOUGH
POWER AND
SKILLS TO TAKE
WHATEVER WE
WANT...

DAT RIGHT, PIERRE.
EVEN TAKE FROM THE
TITHE COLLECTOR
AND THE BENE-
FACTRESS
HERSELF

"FROM
WHOEVER
WE WANT.

BOLD
WORDS.

WORDS
YOU, AND THE
DESCENDANTS OF
BOTH GUILDS,
WILL SOON COME
TO REGRET.

THE PACT IS
ENDED.

SUFFER
THE CON-
SEQUENCES.

STOP
HIM! THE
VIAL!
HE'S...

... GONE.
THE OTHER
TWO ARE
USELESS
WITH-
OUT...



DON'T WORRY,
T'IEF! YOU BE
STEALIN' THE PART
OF THE ELIXIR
YOUR GUILD HAS.
THAT'S WHY
I PAID
YOU FOR
IT!

I GOT
THE SECOND
RIGHT HERE.
NOW I'LL JUST
BE TRACKIN'
HIM BACK TO
PARIS TO GET
THE LAST.

WITH ALL
THREE VIALS,
THE LONG LIFE CAN
BE MINE TO GIVE TO
THE AGASSINS.
WE WILL BE HAVIN'
THE POWERS AND
THE LONG
LIFE!



THE GARDEN
DISTRICT...

I GREW
UP ON THE
STREETS.

DON'T
REMEMBER
MY REAL
PARENTS.

TOOK
TO STEALIN'
TO SURVIVE.

THAT'S
HOW I MET
JEAN-LUC.
TRIED TO
STEAL HIS
WALLET.

HE
TOOK A
SHINE TO ME...
TOOK ME IN AS
ONE OF HIS
OWN. TAUGHT
ME
WHAT
I KNOW.

DIDN'T
KNOW HE
WAS THE HEAD
OF THE LEGENDARY
THIEVES
GUILD.

HENRI
WAS
LIKE A
BROTHER
TO ME.

THEY
BE THE ONLY
FAMILY I
GOT.
AND
NOW...

YOU
STILL
GOT US,
GAMBIT...
THE
X-MEN.

THAT
I DO,
CHERIE.
THANK
YOU.

LOOK,
I KNOW THIS
IS NOT EASY
FOR YOU, BUT
I HAVE TO
DO THIS...
YOU...

...YOU
DON'T HAVE
TO BE 'STANDIN'
GUARD ON
BELLA DONNA.
I CAN FIND
SOME-
ONE...

I'M
DOING
THIS FOR
YOU, REMY.
NOT FOR
HER.

BOTH
GUILDS
MAY TRY AND
COME AFTER
HER. I'LL
KEEP HER
SAFE.

BEFORE
YOU GO,
TELL
ME...

WHAT
IS THIS
PLACE?

I
BOUGHT
IT YEARS
AGO. A
PLACE TO
RETIRE TO ONE
DAY. SETTLE
DOWN AND
RAISE A
FAMILY.

Pah! WHO
AM I KIDDING?
I'LL NEVER
SETTLE
DOWN.

BUT
EVEN A
THIEF HAS
TO HAVE
DREAMS,
EH?

TAKE
CARE,
CHERIE!

YOU
TOO,
SUGAR.

YOU
TOO.



...TO YOU
AND ME
ALONE,
GIRL.

SO,
TELL ME,
BELLA
DONNA...

A SHORT TIME
LATER...



...ARE
YOU THE
DREAM OF
A THIEF
?



SORRY
TO SEE
THAT,
MARILIS,
BUT...
I NEED YOUR
HELP.

HAVE IN-
FORMATION
THAT CAN HELP
ME SAVE
BELL'S
LIFE.

IT
WILL
MEAN BE-
TRAYING
YOUR GUILD...
YOUR
FAMILY.

PARIS

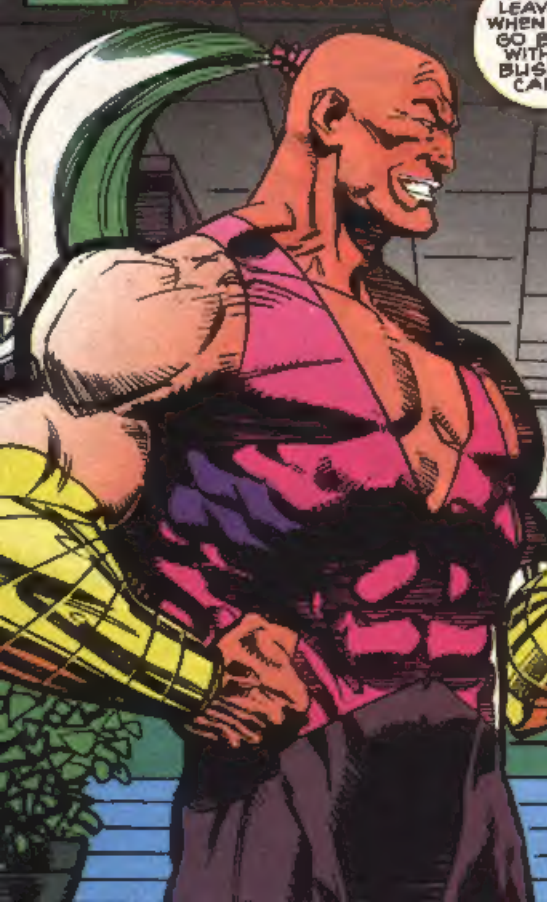


I CAN
LIVE
WITH
IT.

I HATE TO
LEAVE YOU
WHEN THINGS
GO BADLY
WITH YOUR
BUSINESS,
CANDRA...

...BUT
I HAVE MY
OWN
AFFAIRS TO
ATTEND.

DO NOT
CONCERN
YOURSELF
WITH ME,
SIDON...



...EVERY-
THING
WILL BE
RESOLVED
AS
PLANNED.

TO BE
CONTINUED...